

AMENDMENTS

Prior to further examination, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application:

1. (Cancelled).
2. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a collaboration engine;

control logic communicatively connected to the collaboration engine, wherein the control logic selectively invokes an instance of one or more features of the collaboration engine in response to commands received by the control logic;

a network interface;

memory;

management applications communicatively connected to the control logic;

a storage medium to store a plurality of collaboration rules; and

a collaboration agent, to provide an interface through which digitally disparate sellers, dealers and/or manufacturers agree to selectively participate in commercial transactions for requesting users, and to enable each of the sellers, dealers and/or manufacturers to define terms and conditions under which they selectively participate with one another to facilitate commercial collaboration between these otherwise digitally disparate providers to provide, at least in part, product inventory information from participating sellers, dealers and/or manufacturers including,

at least, provider-specific product attributes, the collaboration agent to provide the users with a list of options reflecting available product inventory selected so as to guarantee a user selecting at least one of the options from the list at least one result from the available product inventory automatically seed an inventory search result with options identified on products currently available within inventory.

3. (Cancelled).

4. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the network interface includes Internet compatible facilities.

5. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the collaboration agent further comprises:

statistical tool applications;

report generation tool applications; and

user interface applications.

6. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the user interface applications further comprises a GUI interface.

7. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the collaboration agent further comprises:

a database manager to populate and manage information resident within associated databases;

a search rules engine for searching data structures; and

a data translator.

8. (Previously Amended) An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the data translator, the search rules engine, and the database manager form an integral part of the collaboration engine.

9. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the memory further comprises:

a rules data element; and

a search/transaction history data element.

10. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the memory further comprises volatile or non-volatile memory.

11. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the storage medium further comprises:

a consolidated inventory database; and

a product identification database.

12. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the storage medium is located externally from the collaboration agent.

13. (Cancelled).

14. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the control logic further comprises a series of executable instructions which, when executed by a processor, dynamically generate an interface through which an authorized provider can access and manipulate current data content in an associated database.

15. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the associated database further comprises a consolidated inventory database, and a product identification database.

16. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the database manager further comprises a data management function which, when invoked, enables a user to modify product attribute information.

17. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the search rules engine further comprises:

a collaboration management feature; and

a data acquisition management feature.

18. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the data translator updates and manages inventory of associated data structures.

19. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the data translator translates and presents retrieved information to a user in a standard language.

20. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the translation of retrieved information into a standard language occurs dynamically.

21. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 7, further comprising a collaboration rules database which, when invoked by the search rules engine, identifies and divides collaboration partners into preferential tiers based, at least in part, on the collaboration rules.

22. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the collaboration rules database comprises a one-dimensional data structure.

23. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the one-dimensional data structure further comprises:

a seller identification field; and

a collaboration partner identification field.

24. (Withdrawn) An apparatus comprising:

a seller server;

a dealer server;

a manufacturer server;

a commerce server further comprising:

a storage medium to store a plurality of collaboration rules;

a collaboration agent, to provide an interface through which digitally disparate sellers, dealers and/or manufacturers agree to selectively participate in commercial transactions for requesting users, and to enable each of the sellers, dealers and/or manufacturers to define terms and conditions under which they selectively participate with one another to facilitate commercial collaboration between these otherwise digitally disparate providers the innovative collaboration agent; and

a data communication network communicatively connecting the seller server, the dealer server, the manufacturer server, and the commerce server.

25. (Withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 24, wherein the data communication network further comprises the Internet.

26. (Withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 25, wherein the seller server further comprises a web-site facilitating car research and sales for requesting users.

27. (Withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the dealer server further comprises a dealer management system (DMS) employed by a dealer to manage various aspects of a business.

28. (Withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 27, wherein the manufacturer server further comprises a source for accurate product information provided by a car manufacturer.

29. (Withdrawn) A method for facilitating dynamically collaborative commerce over a data network comprising:

establishing an electronic commerce collaboration association; and

facilitating dynamically collaborative electronic commerce, further comprising managing one or more aspects of information contained within a data structure, and dynamically generating an interface through which an authorized provider can access and manipulate current data content in an associated database.

30. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 29, wherein establishing electronic commerce collaboration associations further comprises:

receiving a request from a provider to access a collaboration agent;

determining whether the provider is authorized to access the collaboration agent;

if the provider is authorized to access the collaboration agent, performing the following actions:

generating an interface through which authorized users can define and modify collaboration rules;

receiving indications of desired collaboration partners;

defining collaboration partners based, at least in part, on the received indications of desired collaboration partners; and

defining a hierarchical tier definition based, at least in part, on the received indications of desired collaboration partners.

31. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 30, wherein accessing the collaboration agent further comprises accessing a web site via the Internet.

32. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 31, wherein determining whether the provider is authorized to access the collaboration agent further comprises identifying a cookie installed on the accessing computing device.

33. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 29, wherein facilitating dynamically collaborative electronic commerce further comprises:

- initiating a search for a product or a service;
- providing an interface through which a user can specify product or service attributes;
- developing search rules based, at least in part, on the provided attributes;
- executing an inventory search based, at least in part, on the search rules; and
- translating select details of the search results into a desired language.

34. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 33, wherein facilitating dynamically collaborative electronic commerce further comprises:

- receiving selection indications from the user;
- identifying availability of the selected product; and
- enabling the user to purchase the product based, at least in part, on the availability of the product.

35. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 33, wherein the product/service attributes further comprise lifestyle and product use information.

36. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 34, wherein enabling the user to purchase the product based, at least in part, on the availability of the product further comprises:

generating a prompt for the user to enable purchase of the product based, at least in part, on the availability of the product;

when the user generates an indication to purchase the product, performing the following actions:

soliciting a request for quote (RFQ) from one or more select providers denoting availability of the requested product or product configuration;

receiving a response from a provider;

notifying the user of the response; and

facilitating completion of the purchase.

37. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 36, further comprising saving data from the search request for subsequent use.

38. (Withdrawn) A method for facilitating dynamically collaborative commerce over a data network comprising:

establishing an electronic commerce collaboration association; and

facilitating dynamically collaborative electronic commerce, further comprising managing one or more aspects of information contained within a data structure, and dynamically generating an interface through which an authorized user can access current product data content in an associated database facilitated by deep seeding.

39. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 38, wherein generating an interface through which an authorized user can access current product data content in an associated database facilitated by deep seeding further comprises:

presenting the user with a deep seeded options list;

identifying a selection of particular product attributes by the user;

performing an initial search of the associated database based, at least in part, on the received style information;

presenting the user with a list of the products that substantially match the desired options list; and

receiving an indication of whether one or more of the identified products is acceptable to the user.

40. (Withdrawn) A method according to the method of claim 39, wherein presenting the user with a deep seeded option list further comprises:

dynamically toggling the available options list based upon prior selections and availability of desired combinations;

requesting an evaluation from the user of the options selected; and

if the user is not satisfied with the available inventory options, including additional options based on additional option lists.

41. (Withdrawn) A storage medium comprising executable content, which when executed by an accessing machine, causes the machine to:

establish electronic commerce collaboration associations; and

facilitate dynamically collaborative electronic commerce, further comprising managing one or more aspects of information contained within a data structure, and dynamically generating an interface through which an authorized provider can access and manipulate current data content in an associated database.

42. (Withdrawn) A storage medium according to claim 41 wherein the storage medium resides within a remote server communicatively coupled to and accessible by an executing system.